

Oral Health

Healthy Hawai'i 2020
A Community Health Plan

Oral Health

Oral health is critical to our general health and well-being. Good oral health enables us to eat properly, work productively, go to school ready to focus on learning, feel good about our appearance and enjoy life. In the United States, the two most common oral diseases are dental caries (tooth decay) and periodontal (gum) disease. These conditions are largely preventable with good oral hygiene practices and preventive dental visits. Unfortunately, oral health care is too often viewed as an “extra” service, and people and insurance coverage typically focus on other health care issues or problems first¹.

Indicators

- Increase the proportion of adults who have visited a dentist in the past year.
 - 2014 Baseline²: 71.6%
 - Hawaii 2020 target: 75.2%
 - HP 2020 target: --
- Increase the proportion of pregnant women who have their teeth cleaned during pregnancy.
 - 2012 Baseline³: 42.5%
 - Hawaii 2020 target: 44.6%
 - HP 2020 target: --
- Increase the proportion of children age 1-17 with one or more preventive visit to a dentist in the past 12 months.
 - 2011/2012 Baseline⁴: 83.1%
 - Hawaii 2020 target: 87.2%
 - HP 2020 target: --
- Reduce the proportion of third graders with untreated tooth decay.
 - 2015 Baseline⁵: 22%
 - Hawaii 2020 target: 21%
 - HP 2020 target: --

Indicators (cont.)

- Reduce the proportion of third graders with urgent need of dental care.
 - 2015 Baseline⁵: 7%
 - Hawaii 2020 target: 6%
 - HP 2020 target: --
- Increase the proportion of third graders with protective dental sealants.
 - 2015 Baseline⁵: 38%
 - Hawaii 2020 target: 40%
 - HP 2020 target: --

Strategies^{1,5}

- Develop and implement an oral health surveillance plan to improve data collection, analysis and the use of data
- Develop effective, evidence-based community and school-based dental disease prevention programs for all age groups, particularly those who are experiencing oral health disparities.
- Continue to support and expand affordable and accessible preventive dental care services to Hawaii’s low-income population.
- Expand Medicaid dental services for adults beyond the current coverage for “emergencies only” to include preventive and treatment services.
- Develop strategies to reduce barriers to finding and receiving preventive dental care services for children enrolled in the Medicaid program.
- Use or adapt existing educational programs for pregnant women and for health and dental professionals regarding the safety and importance of dental care and preventive counseling during pregnancy and in the neonatal period.
- Explore innovative, evidenced-based strategies to expand access to underserved, high-risk populations, including tele-dentistry.

Strategies (cont.)

- Develop corporate oral health promotion and preventive services, such as parental education and fluoride varnish, into well-child visits, Women, Infants, Children (WIC), Early Head Start, Head Start and other early childhood programs geared toward children 0-5 years of age.
- Expand school-based oral health prevention programs at high risk schools to include, at a minimum, the placement of dental sealants, the application of topical fluorides and oral health education.
- Conduct ongoing educational campaigns to (1) encourage the first dental visit by age one, (2) increase oral health literacy and awareness, (3) promote the importance of oral health as part of general health and well-being, and (4) promote the benefits of water fluoridation and other fluorides for the reduction of dental disease.
- Offer oral health screenings and referral services in programs that serve children at greatest risk.
- Develop case management systems that help parents navigate the complex dental care delivery and payment system to assure that children needing dental care obtain it.
- Increase the number of children who use their annual dental exam benefits offered through their insurance (private and public) coverage.
- Assess and address issues regarding Medicaid participation among private dentists.
- Advocate for the expansion of dental services that target high-risk populations.

Citations and further resources

¹[Hawaii Oral Health: Key Findings](#)

²[Behavior Risk Factor Surveillance System \(BRFSS\)](#)

³[Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System \(PRAMS\)](#)

⁴[National Survey of Children's Health](#)

⁵[Hawaii Smiles Oral Health Screening Survey](#)